



MASTERCLASS

DAVID MAMET

TEACHES DRAMATIC WRITING



ABOUT **DAVID MAMET**

David Mamet was born in 1947 and raised in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Goddard College in Vermont, graduating in 1969 with a degree in English literature but considers the Chicago Public Library his alma mater. A prolific dramatist, David won the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1984 for *Glengarry Glen Ross* and earned a reputation for writing working-class characters and for his trademark dialogue. In 1985, David and actor William H. Macy founded the Atlantic Theater Company, an off-Broadway nonprofit theater. To date, he has written 36 plays, 29 screenplays, 17 books, and directed 11 films.



1. **INTRODUCTION**

CLASS WORKBOOK

David's Workbook supplements each lesson with Chapter Reviews, Take It Further opportunities, and Assignments. This printable PDF is filled with places for you to take notes as you go.

THE HUB

Share your works in progress, and ask your peers for help and support if you've hit a road-block, in [The Hub](#).

OFFICE HOURS

Submit your questions on the MasterClass site and keep your eyes peeled for David's personal responses.

DAVID'S SCRIPTS

To fully enjoy some of the lessons, we recommend reading the full scripts of three of David's plays: *American Buffalo*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and *Oleanna*.

HOW TO USE DAVID'S MASTERCLASS

Welcome to David's MasterClass! The exercises in this workbook are designed to equip you with the skills to write drama. Use David's workbook to follow along with the video lessons, and share your assignments with the MasterClass online community to put his teachings and experiences into practice.

1.

NOTES

2+3.

PURPOSE OF DRAMA

“So the question is, ‘How do we examine our soul? How do we get closer to God? How do we get closer to the truth?’ And one way is through drama.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Everything in Life Is Drama
- Good Drama Doesn’t Teach
- The Only Purpose Is to Entertain
- Drama Is a Form of Myth
- Drama Frees Us From Reason
- Drama Helps Us Deal With Our Consciousness

CHAPTER REVIEW

Everything in our life is drama. Drama relieves the burden of our consciousness. We attempt to unite groups of people and establish ourselves and our identity through the stories we tell. This is a primal instinct that has been with us since prehistoric times, when, at the end of the day, we would gather around a camp fire and share stories. Today the camp fire has been replaced by the computer and television, but these devices represent the same attempt to unify us as a species through the telling of tales and narratives. When we relate stories in our everyday lives, we dramatize them. We unconsciously alter what may or may not be real events to increase their dramatic potential, and we tell stories that have surprising punchlines.

That’s what drama is. Just as we do in drama, we structure everything in our lives into cause and effect, even if there is no real correlation. Drama exists as a way to discharge our leftover energy, the same leftover energy of trying to establish cause and effect. The purpose of drama is threefold:

- We don’t investigate reason via drama. Rather, drama frees us from reason.
- Drama does not exist to make people better, to give them ideas, to teach, to reform, or to espouse good causes.
- The sole purpose of drama is to entertain.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Start to observe drama inherent in life. For example, David mentions that we all dramatize the weather and the amount of time we wait for the bus. Notice whenever you find yourself dramatizing a story. In what ways do you hyperbolize or exaggerate, and to what end?
- David says that kids love to hear weird stories, so try telling one to your child, niece or nephew, or the child of a friend. Suspend your own rationality and start making up a story out of thin air. Share the story you told in [The Hub](#).

2+3.

PURPOSE OF DRAMA

TAKE IT FURTHER (CONT'D)

- David calls myth a poetic statement of an unverifiable reality. It is not false but merely unverifiable. Read Roland Barthes's *Mythologies*, a collection of essays whose thesis is that myth is a language that is ideological and historical, but not natural. For Barthes, the myth works by seduction, making us want things, and he uses a multitude of examples, including the depiction of Romans in film, steak and fries, toys, and the face of Greta Garbo. Notice the similarities between David's concept of myth and that of Barthes and discuss them in [The Hub](#) with your classmates. Think about how mythology colors your daily life and draw on these realizations when you are creating dramas.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Share a myth with your classmates in [The Hub](#). It can be an epic account of an infamous night out with friends that has been solidified in the history of your camaraderie, or a tale about a family member that has been passed down through generations — anything that tells a story. The ultimate goal is to entertain your audience (i.e., your classmates). Write the myth as compellingly as you can, working to engage your readers as if you were all gathered around the camp fire.

$2+3.$

NOTES

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4+5.

DRAMATIC RULES

“That’s the rule of dramatic writing. You start at this dot. You go to that dot, and you stop. You’re gonna encounter stuff along the way. The stuff that you encounter along the way will be determined by your imagination. You’ll say, ‘Oh my God, what if this, what if that, what if that?’ But you have to be unafraid to be challenged.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Aristotle’s Rule for Story
- The Hero’s Journey
- Aristotle’s Unities
- Keep the Story Simple
- The Basic Rule: Tell the Story
- Cut It if You Think You Should
- Master the Rules by Writing

CHAPTER REVIEW

Your job is to tell a story. The story has a hero, and he/she wants one thing. The story begins when something precipitates an event. Be excited when you get yourself into a situation that you can’t think your way out of, because that guarantees your audience won’t be able to either. Be simple in your storytelling so that your audience can follow; they have to know what story they’re following so that you can mislead them. Anticipate their desire to jump ahead so you can throw them through a loop. Be wary of what David calls “location sickness.” If it isn’t essential to the story and the plot, dispense with it. A good rule of thumb is, if you think you might cut it sometime, cut it right now.

David sees a dramatist as one who is not inspired by solutions, but rather by situations, and he uses *Aristotle’s Poetics* as a guide. Aristotle maintains that the hero of a story must undergo two things: recognition and reversal of a situation. David cites Oedipus and Moses as examples of the tenets of *Poetics* in action. The hero, simply put, does not understand. Something has to happen from the outside that inspires the hero in a way that he/she didn’t realize before. Aristotle asserts that there must be the unities of time, place, and action. Work on mastering these unities.

View each scene as an attempt to solve the problem of the narrative. The scene inevitably fails to solve this problem, leading you to the next scene, which contains more information to help ameliorate the situation but also brings more trouble. The third scene comprises even more information but at the same time gets us in even deeper. This leads us into the second act, which is where the difficulty in writing any drama — especially tragedies — lies. The hero is stuck in the second act. Nothing has worked, and all of his/her good ideas have been unsuccessful. The hero struggles with coming back to a sense of self or purpose in a confusing, tumultuous world. At the end of the second act, the hero’s quest is clarified, enabling him/her to go on to the third act. These steps demonstrate drama as an exercise in failure, as well as lies.

4+5.

DRAMATIC RULES

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Read [Aristotle's Poetics](#), and familiarize yourself with the stories of [Oedipus](#) and [Moses](#).
- David enjoys the works of Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse. The famous pair knew how to write successful dramas, comedies, and musicals. Read Lindsay and Crouse's plays *State of the Union* and *Life With Father*, then watch the film adaptations. Take notes about how each play/film is structured and look out for David's rules for drama in action.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Choose a recent president or another powerful world leader whom you are somewhat familiar with. Write an outline of this person's political and personal career that follows the structure set out by Aristotle in Poetics. Begin with a problem (one that is political, personal, or both) that this leader (or "tragic hero") has to solve. Why does he or she have to solve it? What will happen if this leader fails? How does he or she attempt to solve it? What happens that actually makes the problem worse? What does the tragic hero do at the end of this story? Does the hero end up succeeding or succumb to an enormous downfall? What does the hero realize about himself or herself at the end of this quest? Share your outline with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

$4^+5.$

NOTES

STORY IDEAS

“You got to trust that it’s there even when you don’t believe it’s there. Because it’s there.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Use Your Life Experiences
- Inspiration for *American Buffalo*
- Inspiration for *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*
- Inspiration for *Oleanna*
- Themes
- Look for the Idea Where You Least Expect It

CHAPTER REVIEW

We have ideas all the time. All day long we fantasize, and these daydreams offer story ideas. While it’s possible to infer themes in David’s work, he doesn’t consciously insert them into his drama. Rather, his past and current affairs naturally inform his narratives. For example, *American Buffalo* was inspired by his life in Chicago, when he used to play poker with less-than-reputable locals.

He found their actions and statements provocative and used them for his play. The idea behind *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* was courting. *Oleanna* was written during a period of sensitivity surrounding issues of political correctness and of sexual harassment on college campuses, this social climate giving rise to the play.

As David’s life changed, so did the topics of his dramas. He recognizes that his own life experiences are somewhat similar to everybody else’s but also sees them as different enough to interest others. Writing a drama is like analyzing a dream, but in reverse; you’re making up the dream before scrutinizing it. The story is there — you just need to look for it. Trust that it’s there, even if you don’t believe it.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- David refers to English poet, playwright, novelist, and critic Algernon Charles Swinburne in this chapter. Explore Swinburne’s works in this [online archive](#).
- David shares an anecdote about *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953), directed by Ida Lupino. The actor who played the hitchhiker, William Talman, was slapped across the face at a stoplight in Los Angeles by a man who had seen the film and was angered by the evilness of Talman’s character. Talman later remarked about the event, “I never won an Academy Award, but I guess that was about as close as I ever will come to one.” Watch *The Hitch-Hiker*.
- Every time you catch yourself daydreaming, write down a description of the imagined situation. Consult this list for story ideas when you need them.

6.

STORY IDEAS

ASSIGNMENTS

- Take an idea you've had floating around in your head for a long time, or revisit one on which you started to work but gave up. David says the story is there and you need to search for it, even if you don't believe it exists. Sit down and force yourself to work on it until you come up with an outline. Upload your outline and share your experience in [The Hub](#). Try to pull from your own life experiences, like David.

6.

NOTES

CHARACTER

“The characters are what they do. Nobody sat down and said, ‘Oh, I’m gonna be the this. I’m gonna be the that. Oh look, there’s the corrector of mistakes. There’s the martinet.’”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- There Is No Such Thing as Character
- Characters Are What They Do
- Give Characters an Objective
- Writing Backstory Is Just Passing the Time
- Don’t Manipulate Change in the Character

CHAPTER REVIEW

What is character? David cites Aristotle’s view on what character is: simply habitual action. There is no more to a character other than what he or she does. This is all fueled by an objective: a character wants something and won’t stop until he or she gets it. Even the things a character says are spoken in an effort to obtain something from another person. Never manipulate a change in your characters, as this is equivalent to manipulating the audience.

Character doesn’t really exist as we naturally conceive of it. Rather, character is action. Writing backstory for a character is an excuse to prolong sitting down and actually writing. This is why David sees many acting exercises as unnecessary. When actors attempt to construct a background for their character as a way to inhabit them — discussing where the character would have gone to school, their favorite kind of car, what’s in their wardrobe, etc. — it’s simply a way to keep from rehearsing. Like any other human being, actors put off the pain of being bad.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Check out the books David mentions in this chapter: Stacy Schiff’s *The Witches: Suspicion, Betrayal, and Hysteria in 1692 Salem* and Bruno Bettelheim’s *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Take a character from a film, play, or television show, and deconstruct him or her. Do not compile a list of traits. Rather, identify individual actions that make up the character. What is their objective? Think about what he or she does to achieve that objective and how that informs his or her character. Share your notes with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

7. NOTES

PLOT

“Writing a plot is one of the hardest things I ever learned how to do. It’s just hard, because it’s like playing with some unclean substance. And it is, because the unclean substance is your own consciousness.”
—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Plot Is All That There Is
- You Need a Precipitating Event
- Second-Act Problem: The Mid-Life Crisis
- Don’t Skip Over the Real Problem
- Learn Plot by Writing Plots
- Find the Plot

CHAPTER REVIEW

Plot is all that there is. Think of plot as you would a joke: everything in a joke moves toward the punchline, and anything that isn’t tending toward the punchline kills the joke. The same rule applies to plot. If a scene doesn’t serve the plot and help the narrative progress to its end goal, take it out.

Writing a plot is difficult, even for David. A plot needs a beginning, middle, and end, as well as a precipitating event that must inspire the hero to achieve a goal. His or her journey needs a specific end, at which point the question raised at the beginning is answered, either positively or negatively. David cites the example Aristotle gives in *Poetics* of Oedipus Rex setting out to find the cause of the plague on Thebes (the precipitating event), becoming king (part of the journey), and at the end, finding out he’s the cause of the plague (the question is answered).

The second act, like a midlife crisis, is where everything is derailed. The hero knows where he or she is going and then all of a sudden gets lost. The second act of the play ends with a confession in which the hero acknowledges his or her hopelessness. At this point, the hero has the capacity to face the third act, reinvigorated by the struggle, because it’s the first time he or she is actually understanding it. Following the confession, the hero is energized and inspired to continue the quest.

You have to (re)learn how to write a plot for every new stage play or screenplay. David says when you can fit the plot into fifteen lines on one sheet of paper, then you’re ready to write the film or the play. When you can confidently draw it, or outline the plot, it’s time to start writing.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- In this chapter, David quotes Dante’s *Divine Comedy* in reference to the midlife crisis that is the second act of a drama. Read Dante’s [narrative poem](#).
- Psalms is an example of the all-is-lost moment crucial to the second act of any play or film. Read [this book](#) of the Bible.
- Read Joseph Campbell’s [Hero with a Thousand Faces](#) to better understand the hero myth.

8.

PLOT

ASSIGNMENTS

- Take one of your rough ideas for a film or play and turn it into an outline that fits on fifteen lines on one sheet of paper. What was most difficult about the process of condensing your plot? Did this exercise make you realize that parts of your plot were unnecessary? Did any new ideas come to you? Describe your experience in [The Hub](#) and post your outline to the [Rate and Review](#) tool to get feedback from your classmates.

8.

NOTES

9+10.

STRUCTURING THE PLOT

“The difficulties of the hero are the same thing as the difficulties of the writer.”
—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Plotting the Journey
- Three Uses of the Knife: Three-Act Structure

CHAPTER REVIEW

David uses corkboards with sheets of butcher paper or index cards on which he works out the progression of the plot. He finds it easier to see if the progression makes sense rather than looking at individual scenes, because it is easy to become attached to the latter. You have to reduce each scene to a mere incident and cut it if it doesn't tend toward the punchline, even if the scene is one of your favorites.

Aristotle tells us that a play is nothing other than the structure of its incidents. Think of a scene as a unit that contains one incident that informs the journey. If it doesn't contain an incident that affects the narrative, it's not a scene and doesn't belong in a play or film. Your goal should always be to get from point A to point B.

David refers to early twentieth-century American musician Lead Belly's rules for writing the blues. Lead Belly said it begins with a knife, which you use in verse one to cut bread to feed yourself. You need strength to work so that you can get together with your girlfriend in the evening. In verse two, you use the knife to shave so you can look good for your girlfriend. You arrive at your girlfriend's house in verse three to find her in bed with another guy, at which point you use the knife to cut her lying heart out. Lead Belly's three-step process for structuring blues verses can be directly applied to the three acts of a play or film: the same knife carries a different weight in each act.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Listen to a few of Lead Belly's songs. Notice the way he tells a story through his lyrics and the way his music complements the tale.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Arrange the scenes of your play or film on index cards and pin them to a corkboard. Start playing with the progression and see where this leads you.

9+10.

NOTES

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - **AMERICAN BUFFALO**

“American Buffalo is about a bunch of guys in a junk shop, and it’s a tragedy. That means people have more or less good intentions and they end up ruining each other in a way that they could not foresee but that at the end of the play is revealed as inevitable and at the same time surprising.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Three Uses of the Knife:
The Buffalo Nickel
- Plot Structure Is Hard-Wired
Into the Human Experience

CHAPTER REVIEW

American Buffalo revolves around Walter “Teach” Cole, Donny Dubrow, and Bobby, three characters in a junk shop who are planning a robbery. The play is a tragedy, meaning the three ultimately ruin each other but are unaware of this fate. At the end of the play, it’s clear that their downfall was unavoidable, but it’s still shocking.

Donny Dubrow is the protagonist of the play. He’s a mentor to Bobby, a young kid who is the most significant person in his life, and, in effect, his son. Bobby has failed to watch his mark, a man who bought an American Buffalo coin from Donny. In retrospect, the transaction angers Donny, as he didn’t like the man’s attitude and believes he has more money than he offered. He resolves to rob the man for his coin collection. At the beginning of the play, Donny lambastes the boy for his negligence in watching the man who purchased the coin who is going away, leaving his home vacant. He’s trying to teach the boy how to behave like a man and live by the code of their criminal life. David points out that this is a very common scene in dramas, and every parent has made this speech. A famous example is found in *Hamlet*, when Polonius counsels his son, Laertes, before he embarks for university. Both Donny in *American Buffalo* and Polonius in Shakespeare’s play are trying to teach their children a few last lessons before they go on into the world.

A third party — the antagonist — comes into the equation, a man named Teach. Teach figures out that Donny is engaged in a robbery from the coded language with which he speaks to Bobby. Preying upon Donny’s concerns, Teach manipulates his way into participating in the robbery and in the process convinces Donny that Bobby is superfluous to the operation. Teach preys upon the psychology of Donny’s fatherhood; Donny is worried that Bobby isn’t ready to go into the world, that he hasn’t properly learned and applied the lessons he has taught him.

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - AMERICAN BUFFALO

CHAPTER REVIEW (CONT'D)

Teach represents the bad part of the self, the bad part of the protagonist. He takes advantage of Donny's anxiety and convinces him to deal Bobby out of the robbery. The kid is heartbroken by this decision. At this point, we come to the end of the act, where we hear of Fletcher, another off-stage character who has been setting up the robbery. The final incident in the first act is Teach suggesting they get rid of Fletcher, too, for the purpose of more personal monetary gain. Donny objects to this, calling it treason, and this concludes the act.

In act two, Fletcher can't be found. Teach believes that Fletcher is in cahoots with Bobby. Capitalizing on the credulity of Donny, he again suggests they get rid of Fletcher. Bobby then reemerges and reports that Fletcher is in the hospital after being mugged. He makes it clear that he knows he is still not going to be included in the robbery, but he wants them to know that he's on their side. In an attempt to placate his father figure and replace what they wanted to steal in the first place, Bobby buys a rare coin, saying that he found it. Teach is suspicious and believes Bobby must have either bought the coin or robbed the mark's coin collection. He questions Bobby, convincing Donny that Bobby has ulterior motives and is behind the plan to sell them out. He tries to extort a confession from Bobby, nearly beating him to death. Ironically, Bobby's attempt to be a man and fulfill his father figure's wishes is interpreted by Donny as an act of treason.

Teach throws a fit, wrecking the junk store, leaving Donny and a badly beaten Bobby in the shop. Donny undergoes a reversal situation à la Aristotle's *Poetics*, changing from mentor to monster. He recognizes this situation, and that's how we know the play is over. This narrative all stems from the original premise, "I have to teach my son how to be a man because he just got something wrong," and ends with, "the best way to teach him is to kill him."

11.

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - AMERICAN BUFFALO

CHAPTER REVIEW (CONT'D)

The American Buffalo coin takes on three meanings through out the narrative. It represents the precipitating event — the man buying the coin from Donny — which then triggers the idea to rob the man of his coin collection. The value of the coin then becomes the reason that the antagonist, Teach, convinces Donny to eject Bobby from the plan, as it is simply too precious to function as a teaching opportunity for Bobby. The coin begins to derail Donny from his original objective: to teach his son how to be a man and handle the real world. The third purpose the coin serves is as an article of redemption for Bobby when he brings Donny another valuable nickel that he has purchased in order to make up for his mistake. The coin takes us full circle back to the beginning of the play.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Read Polonius's [lecture](#) to Laertes.
- David compares the way Teach manipulates Donny to the way Iago plays Othello. Read Shakespeare's [Othello](#).

11.

NOTES

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - **GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS**

"If you say, 'I'm not gonna have one piece of narration in this movie, in this play,' you can tax yourself to be sufficiently interesting that the audience will play along with you, but you also have to be sufficiently honorable that you're not gonna disappoint them by leaving them saying, 'What? What the hell's going on?'"

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Inspiration
- Tragedy vs. Drama
- Structuring the Plot

CHAPTER REVIEW

The inspiration for *Glengarry Glen Ross* came from David's time at a real estate office in Chicago. His role there was essentially a cold-call telemarketer. His colleagues were genius salesmen, crooks, and confidence men. He used to listen to their phone calls from his cubicle.

David started writing the play by working on the scene between Ricky Roma and James Lingk. He starts the scene in the middle of a conversation, as it's thrilling to eavesdrop on something of which you're not entirely sure. It makes you want to listen and find out what's going on all the more. In the scene, a great salesman is trying to sell land to someone who doesn't care, but the long, rambling monologue doesn't seem to make much sense until the end when he says, "What I'm doing is I'm talking about investing in land." The salesman has been talking to the other man as if they're best friends, at which point we receive the punchline "Hi, my name is Ricky Roma. What's yours?" Ricky Roma, one of the heroes of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, is in the same position as David, the writer. They both have to make you want to listen.

Tragedy is the quest of the hero for one specific goal. This quest results in a reversal situation and recognition at the end of the journey which awakens in the audience fear (e.g., "Oh, my God, I'm just like that") and pity (e.g., "Oh, the poor son of a gun").

Tragedy must be strictly structured into incidents, also known as scenes, each of which has to be an essential step in achieving the goal. Drama, on the other hand, where *Glengarry Glen Ross* fits, does not result in reversal of the situation and recognition. Rather, things are changed somewhat and we're given a slice of life. The audience is not left full of fear and pity, but instead saying, "Isn't life just like that?"

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - *GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS*

CHAPTER REVIEW (CONT'D)

David sees *Glengarry Glen Ross* as part of a new twentieth century form called the gang drama. A gang drama has many protagonists instead of just one and usually deals with the world of a particular profession. In the case of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, that profession is real estate, specifically the selling of fraudulent land in Chicago. To David, the play is an exercise in character; as you learned in Chapter 10: Character, all the players in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are speaking to get something from one another, and one learns their character by watching their actions.

David avoided narration, allowing the audience to gradually realize through characters' conversations what's going on and why leads (i.e., indications of who might be a good prospect to be sold bogus land) are so important. In Chapter 15, which focuses on the dramatic rules of narration and exposition, you'll learn how to achieve this telling of information to your audience without spoon-feeding it to them.

By the end of act one, all the characters have been introduced, and in act two, they are all brought together. The office is wrecked and everyone assumes a robbery by an outside party has occurred. Act two becomes a question of "who robbed the office?" and an exploration of the chaos brought about by the sales contest that has put everyone's job on the line. As the act progresses, people start cross-connecting with each other. At the end of the play is another punchline — Aaronow saying he hates the job, an ironic and comically mild reaction to the upheaval and turmoil of the preceding events.

12.

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING THE PLOT - GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Check out other gang dramas. Read Elmer Rice's play *Street Scene*. Take advantage of a [free download](#) of five of Sidney Kingsley's plays and watch the film adaptations of some of his plays, including *Men in White* (1934) and *Detective Story* (1951). Read *The Women*, a play by Clare Booth Luce about women stuck in a hotel in Reno awaiting their divorces.

ASSIGNMENT

- The stage play *Glengarry Glen Ross* ironically does not include the most famous scene from the movie (i.e., the Alec Baldwin "Coffee is for Closers" speech). The play also does not include the scene in which Jack Lemmon goes to a prospective buyer's home and humiliates himself. Read the stage play and watch the movie and think about whether the play would have been improved if those two scenes were somehow incorporated into it. (Or would those scenes have been superfluous?) Share your opinions about this in [The Hub](#).

12.

NOTES

DIALOGUE

“Why do people speak in real life like we do now? They speak to get something from each other. It might seem like they speak to express themselves, but, as I understand it, that’s not true. They only express themselves to get something from one another.”
—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Write Dialogue Rhythmically
- Dialogue Comes From What the Character Wants
- Bad Dialogue
- Just Write It Down and Try It Out
- Poetry Can Move Souls
- Draw Language from Different Cultures
- Draw Language From Those Who Do It Naturally
- Read Great Dialogue

CHAPTER REVIEW

David grew up in a multicultural neighborhood in which status was awarded for the ability to be witty, funny, and trenchant. A talent for telling stories and jokes was very highly prized in his community and within his family, which informed his writing career.

Earlier, David told us that gossip makes excellent dialogue because people unconsciously dramatize events for the benefit of the listener. They narrate not what happened, but the essence of what happened. When you gossip, your listener suspends disbelief. Your dialogue should be rhythmic because human speech is naturally rhythmic. When you listen to people having a conversation, they’re creating rhythmic poetry; pauses are filled, sentences are capped by the other’s interruptions, all amounting to a patterned cadence. A play is essentially a poem written for several voices.

Keep in mind that people speak in real life not just to express themselves, but to get something from the person to whom they are talking. When you figure out what your character wants, you will know what his or her dialogue should be. However, the desires of a character need not exactly match the sentences that come out of his or her mouth. For example, in an elevator someone might ask another, “What floor do you want?” or the person might say, “I want to go to bed with you until the cows come home.”

The two things might mean exactly the same thing, but each line of dialogue presents an entirely different way of conveying the desire of the character, one discreet and veiled, the other straightforward and direct. Judge your dialogue by this rule: if the point has already been made, or if the character is not speaking to get something from another person, the character has bad dialogue.

Some writers have an innate gift for dialogue and some don’t. If you belong to the latter category, don’t fret, as the ability is not a prerequisite for a being playwright. David knows this is true because plays are done in translation, and movies are sometimes given subtitles or dubbed. A talent for writing dialogue is an advantage, but you don’t need it to hold the audience’s attention.

13+14.

DIALOGUE

TAKE IT FURTHER

- David mentions Beau Brummell (1778–1840), a London dandy who was revered for his wit and ability to tell jokes. Read more about the famous fop in the wondrously humorous book [*The Wits and Beaux of Society*](#) by Grace and Philip Wharton, published in 1890. The chapter on Beau Brummell begins on page 160 of the PDF or 138 in the text.
- Read the poetry of [Rudyard Kipling](#), [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#), [John Keats](#), and [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#).
- Check out authors who David thinks are good writers of dialogue: George V. Higgins, Patrick O'Brian, John le Carré, and Dawn Powell. In particular, read Ernest Hemingway's [*Islands in the Stream*](#).

$13+14.$

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NARRATION AND EXPOSITION

“If you have to narrate it, the audience might understand, but they’ll no longer care.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Leave the Information-Telling to the Newspapers
- Don’t Bore Them With the Facts
- Exposition Is the Excess Flesh
- Leave Narration for TV
- Fix Narration Problems Now
- Shoot for Show, Cut for Dough
- You Want the Audience to Care
- Let Audience Help You Cut Out Exposition

CHAPTER REVIEW

Drama has nothing to do with information. Drama is storytelling that unites people, whereas information is the compiling of facts. As a dramatist, your job is to tell a story and be interesting, not informative.

Setting shouldn’t be a large part of the description in your script for a play because the audience doesn’t really care. David knows this because any good play can be done over the radio. Exposition is also something you don’t need a lot of. Whenever possible, trim and cut, but not too deeply. Use your audience to gauge what you put in and take out of your drama; if they’re keeping up, you haven’t cut too deeply, but if they’re falling asleep, you haven’t cut deeply enough.

Try to avoid narration. Anyone can write it, and it’s better suited for television. If you have to narrate it, the audience might understand, but you’ll lose their interest. David sees the death of drama as two characters talking about something that happened off-stage. If you find yourself relying on conventions such as montage or narration, there’s something wrong with your script that needs to be fixed on day one. As a general rule, don’t shoot something you don’t intend to keep and don’t write something you don’t intend to shoot. Fix your problems now, because they will only grow. David says there’s only one way to avoid the trap of exposition: stage your plays in front of a paying audience.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- David praises Buster Keaton for his structuring of gags. His gags progress like a joke, and the ending of each is inevitable yet surprising. Keaton avoided narration by using as few intertitle cards as possible.
- Watch *Spartan* (2004), written and directed by David and starring William H. Macy, Val Kilmer, and Kristen Bell. Observe the lack of narration and how David leads you through the story without it.

NARRATION AND EXPOSITION

TAKE IT FURTHER (CONT'D)

- Are you relying too much on setting or narration? Edit one of your screenplays (it's okay if it's a rough draft) by cutting all narration and exposition, and see how it is altered. Does the narrative become less easy to follow? Is it made less or more interesting by the elimination of narration?

ASSIGNMENTS

- Pick a film and watch it without sound. Does it make sense without your being able to hear what the characters are saying? What plot choices could be made that would still allow the film to be intelligible sans dialogue and narration? Share the film you chose and your experience with your classmates in [The Hub](#).
- Like David does with his son, take a paragraph from a magazine and rewrite it in three sentences. How can you make the excerpt more clear and concise? What was the writer trying to convey, and how can you encapsulate it? Share the original paragraph and your three-sentence-rewrite with your classmates in [The Hub](#). Alternatively: find a screenplay online and shave one of the scenes down to a page. Make the scene more clear and concise, but work to convey its original meaning and purpose in the plot. Share the original scene and your one-page-rewrite with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

15.

NOTES

SCENES

“There are three questions: Who wants what from who? What happens if they don’t get [it]? Why now? You gotta be able to answer those three simple questions on any scene, on any play.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Every Scene Must Answer Three Questions
- The Audience Doesn’t Care About the Scenes You Cut
- Take Out Obligatory Scenes
- If It’s Boring You, It’ll Bore the Audience

CHAPTER REVIEW

A scene must contain an attempt by the hero to achieve a goal. That goal has to be part of a firm structure of his or her journey from point A to point B. You must be able to answer three questions about every scene of every play or film you write:

- Who wants what from whom?
- What happens if he or she doesn’t get it?
- Why now?

If a scene is not essential, even if it’s lovely, throw it out. The question should always be: if I removed this scene, would the audience miss it? Whether or not *you* would miss it is irrelevant. An “obligatory” scene also doesn’t belong. David identifies such a scene as the moment in a film when, for example, people stop to explain to each other why they have to save the world, or why it’s necessary to get the dying child to the hospital.

If a scene bores you as you’re writing it, it will bore the actors and the audience. Everyone will try to pick up the slack: actors will try to do more with the scene (the last thing you want them to do), and the director will try to do more with the actors (also something you want to avoid). Even the set designer will attempt to break up the monotony of the scene by compensating with the background. Steer clear of situations like this by writing interesting scenes. Success is the ability to keep the audience’s attention between scenes, and the success of scene B is the ability to keep the audience’s attention between scene A and scene C.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Watch *Munich* (2005), a film about the murder of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Take note of the scene in which a man from the Mossad, the Israeli foreign intelligence operations, finds himself in a building with a Palestinian. They meet on the staircase and talk. David calls this an obligatory scene that is useless and not the story that Steven Spielberg, the director, set out to tell. Do you agree with David? Discuss it with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

SCENES

TAKE IT FURTHER (CONT'D)

- Watch *One Day in September* (1999), a documentary about the same act of terrorism at the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Notice the sparsity of Michael Douglas's narration.

ASSIGNMENT

- Take a scene from one of your scripts or screenplays and answer David's three questions: Who wants what from whom? What happens if he or she doesn't get it? Why now? Upload your original scene to the [Rate and Review](#) tool to get feedback from your classmates. If you don't have your own script or screenplay, find one online for a play or film you know well. Dissect one of its scenes by asking these three questions.

16.

NOTES

WRITING PROCESS

*“You’ve gotta stand
being bad if you wanna
be a writer, because if you
don’t, you’re never gonna
write anything good.”*

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me
- Sit Down at the Typewriter and Bleed
- Treasure Your Artifacts
- Write with Your Unconscious Mind
- The Audience Will Go Through the Same Process
- Writer’s Block
- The Thinking, Worrying, and Napping Are Part of the Process
- Outlines
- Writing Is Rewriting
- Be Clinical with Your Work
- Just Write It Down

CHAPTER REVIEW

There’s no good place to start writing. Simply diving in is your best bet. A lack of distractions is essential to the writing process, as is leisure. If the computer tends to distract you, try using pen and paper or even a typewriter, like David. He also likes to work with all the drafts he’s written in front of him. Hold tight to the objects that get you in the mood to write.

David’s advice is to just write it down. Put it on paper. There’s no way to subvert the process, though there are many ways to try. David identifies one as staying in school. Another is to concern yourself with the best scriptwriting software. A third way, which David has done his whole life, is to write endless outlines. At some point, however, you must reconcile yourself to being bad and just start writing. You must get comfortable with the pain of being terrible if you want to be a writer, because if you don’t, you’ll never write anything of worth. When David gets stuck, he’ll either take a nap, try to write for another project, or simply force himself to keep going.

Eventually, you will produce one outline for your play or film. If your outline doesn’t work, neither will your movie or play. If you can’t pitch the film in three minutes and keep the listener’s attention, you don’t know what your movie is. Until you do, no one will make it. As David taught you in Chapter 8: Plot, if you can reduce your unformed ideas, scenes, and notes down to fifteen lines on one page, your work is ready to be written. David knows every shot in a movie before he goes on set, and once he’s there, he never looks at notes because he already knows them. If he doesn’t know them when he arrives to shoot, he’s done something wrong.

Writing dramatically is rewriting. Essentially, you make a movie three times: when you write it, when you shoot it, and when you cut it. Be clinical when looking at your own work. Think of drama as dreamtime; you want to write a drama about the things in life that you can’t figure out — things that don’t quite have a rational solution, things that drive you crazy.

WRITING PROCESS

TAKE IT FURTHER

- David praises Buster Keaton for his structuring of gags. His gags progress like a joke, and the ending of each is inevitable yet surprising. Keaton avoided narration by using as few intertitle cards as possible.
- Watch *Spartan* (2004), written and directed by David and starring William H. Macy, Val Kilmer, and Kristen Bell. Observe the lack of narration and how David leads you through the story without it.
- Download [StayFocusd](#), a Google Chrome browser extension that prevents you from visiting distracting websites. You can customize the extension by selecting specific time frames and websites. This will help you get through difficult parts of the writing process.
- [Read](#) *Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me* by Bruce Jackson, a collection of African-American narrative poems from oral tradition. David mentions in particular the toasts “Stackolee” (page 34 in the text or 45 in the PDF), “Signifying Monkey” (page 150 in the text or 161 in the PDF), and “Titanic” (page 172 in the text or 183 in the PDF).
- [Anthony Trollope](#) was a prolific novelist of the Victorian era who had a very ordered writing process. Read some of [his novels](#), which you can download free of charge.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Share your writing process and a photo of your office with your classmates in [The Hub](#). Do you use a laptop, or do you stick to paper and pen? What objects do you like to have by your side? What writing rituals have you settled into? What times of the day do you write? Is your process as strict and sequential as Anthony Trollope’s, or do you prefer to let things flow naturally? Share any tips about your process that you think would benefit your classmates and try out the ones they offer you meaning and purpose in the plot.

$17+18.$

NOTES

THE AUDIENCE

“You cannot learn how to write drama without writing plays, putting [them] out in front of an audience, and getting humiliated.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Collectively, They're a Genius
- The Audience Is Your Speaking Teacher
- Entertain Them (But Don't Flatter Them)
- The Audience Is Willing to Suspend Disbelief
- Your Journeys Are the Same

CHAPTER REVIEW

You can't fool an audience. David's work has been performed all over the world, and nowhere has he encountered a collectively unintelligent audience. While you may be able to extort a standing ovation out of an audience because they want to believe in what they paid for, you can't extort a laugh or gasp. It is impossible to learn how to write drama without writing plays, putting them on for an audience, and being mortified.

Don't try to flatter the audience or give them what you think they want to hear or see; to flatter someone is to steal his or her capacity to make an independent judgment. The audience is willing to suspend their disbelief because they subconsciously do it every day when listening to gossip.

David shares something he learned from the Quran in his research for a never-realized film about Malcolm X. The prophet Mohammed leaves his disciples with two teachers, a speaking one, the Quran, and a silent one, death. When contemplating how to teach people about drama, David realized that this lesson from the Quran was a particularly apt tool: the speaking teacher is the audience, who figuratively speaks to the quality of your work (by gasping, cheering, or falling asleep), and the silent teacher is the empty page. You've got to look at the empty page, which is as scary as death, and understand that somebody—your characters, your soul—is trying to tell you something. Start listening and translate what you hear to the page. The process doesn't feel like creation so much as discovery. The audience's journey, the hero's journey, and the writer's journey are all the same.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- For the “Take it Further” exercise in chapters 2 & 3: The Purpose of Drama, you observed your own exaggerations, but now it's time to observe those of others. Listen to people gossip (discreetly, of course). Notice their speech patterns, the way they dramatize, and the reception of the stories by their listener(s). Apply what you observe to your own dialogue.

19.

THE AUDIENCE

ASSIGNMENTS

- Go to the movies and don't watch the film on the screen, but rather watch the audience. Bring a notebook with you and mark moments at which the audience gets lost, looks bored, or is extremely engaged in the narrative. Share your observations with your classmates in [The Hub](#), relating the basic outline of the plot and points at which the audience was withdrawn or intrigued. Propose alternatives to scenes that bored the audience. Why did the scene fail? What would have better kept their attention?

19.

NOTES

LIES & TRUTH

“All drama is about something that is hidden.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Find the Truth
- The Audience Comes to Hear the Truth
- Drama Helps Us Search for the Truth
- Not All Untruths Are Lies
- Lie and Truth in *Speed-the-Plow*
- Lie and Truth in *American Buffalo*
- Telling the Uncomfortable Truth About Education And Sex: *Oleanna*
- Telling the Uncomfortable Truth About Race: *Race*

CHAPTER REVIEW

As a writer and a director, David tells us his responsibility is to not lie. He always searches for the truth. If he can get close to the truth and translate it into his dramatic writing, he has done his job. All drama is about something that is hidden, and the hidden truth will set you free. It might be pretty or it might be ugly, but it's the truth.

The theater is a place we go to hear the truth. In that way it is similar to a religious setting. David has noticed that everyone arrives late to church and synagogue, as well as to the theater. People go to these places to satisfy their human need to hear the truth, and they are challenged so deeply in these settings that they have to retain some measure of autonomy, which they sometimes exercise via their late arrival.

We have a right to privacy and the right to embellish. A white lie isn't automatically harmful and is related to gossiping in that we exaggerate or fib in order to entertain and make someone's experience with us more enjoyable. Similarly, in a theatrical situation, we can say things that might be pleasing and aren't necessarily lies, though they are also not necessarily true. To illustrate his point, David uses the example of the mythology of Los Angeles as it relates to *Speed-the-Plow*, a play about two men who plan to make a lot of money by capitalizing on an adventitious event in show business; the fact that somebody might get lucky in Los Angeles means everybody goes to Los Angeles. The chance is essentially a lie, but there is just enough truth in it for people to fool themselves.

In *American Buffalo*, the lie is introduced by the antagonist, nicknamed Teach. Teach's lie, of which he convinces protagonist Donny Dubrow, is that he is the only person who can lead Donny to the truth. Donny is persuaded to believe that everyone else is trying to take advantage of him, including his young protégé, Bobby. Teach so thoroughly coerces Donny into believing the lie that Bobby is almost killed.

LIES & TRUTH

CHAPTER REVIEW (CONT'D)

At the end of *Oleanna*, the audience was so embroiled in the dispute between truth and lie that they screamed and fought, taking sides with one of the two characters in the play — the professor accused of rape or his student, a young, confused, radicalized woman.

With the play *Race* David wanted to confront the difficult topic of ethnicity in the United States. The audience enjoyed the direct, bold placement of a heated monologue by the African American lawyer at the beginning of the play in which he lets his potential client — a white man accused of raping a black woman — know exactly what he thinks of him.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Get a group of people together and play “two truths and a lie.” Each person will share two truths and one lie about him/herself. The object of the other players is to correctly identify the lie. Notice the body language of the player who is sharing his/her autobiographical “facts,” and try to observe how his/her phrasing and movement shift when telling a lie. Drama is about that which is hidden, so do your best to discern how the player attempts to hide the lie. Also notice if the most outrageous or mundane fact was the lie and use your observations for future dialogue and narrative ideas.

ASSIGNMENT

- It’s time to take the work from previous chapters and combine it into a scene. Take your own exaggerations and dramatizations from chapters 2 & 3 and those of others from chapter 19 and use them to write dialogue for one scene of a play or film. Don’t worry about the overall structure of the narrative/plot; the goal here is to simply understand the way people speak and the truth and lies inherent in their speech. Share your scene and thoughts with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

20+21.

NOTES

ACTORS

“My expectation of the actor is hit the mark, look the other guy in the eye, and tell the truth. It’s real simple, that’s why it’s so difficult.”

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Acting Technique
- Casting Actors
- The Greatest Ones Are Prophets
- The Path to Prophecy
- Actors Should Leave Room for the Unforeseeable
- Actors Shouldn’t Try to Get Anything from the Audience
- The Dramatist’s Relationship with the Actor
- Ruth Draper

CHAPTER REVIEW

When David began as a young actor, he was a student at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York and his teacher was Sanford Meisner. David understood the beauty of trying to find a technique for acting, but he didn’t understand how well-known methods such as the Meisner technique and method acting translated into acting that he liked. After contemplating this situation, he founded a theater company in his early twenties. He wanted to start at the beginning and figure out what an actor actually does. David felt like the methods espoused by acting teachers and their disciples inspired the desire to be perfect, which makes one self-conscious and sterile. These methods, David thought, had a tendency to close one in rather than open one out.

David believes that the real question in casting is not “can an actor play the part?” but simply “can they act?” The truth is that casting agents and directors don’t really know what they’re looking for. They attempt to cast for the role, for the look, for character, for voice, for movement, but none of these attributes are germane to the search. When casting, David suggests you merely tell the actor to perform an action and find out whether or not he or she can do it.

David sees the best actors as prophets. In the Jewish tradition a prophet is one who has a direct connection to God or something spiritual. Actors who are prophets have something flowing through them, a wellspring of inspiration and intuition that’s not of their own construction. David’s expectation for actors is taken from that of Jimmy Cagney: hit the mark, look the other guy in the eye, and tell the truth. Ironically, the straightforwardness of the directive is what makes it so difficult.

Actors inform the way we think about life. The attributes and qualities of the characters they bring to life influence our outlook on others and the human condition. Ultimately, an actor must be kind, show up early, know his or her lines, stand still, and allow everyone to do his or her job. In its perfect form, stage acting is an attempt to get something from another actor, but not from the audience, not even understanding. The curtain call is not a moment to elicit praise from the audience, but rather to thank them. An actor should behave like Puck at the end of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: show gratitude for the audience’s attention over the last two hours.

ACTORS

TAKE IT FURTHER

- [Read](#) Sanford Meisner's On Acting.
- Learn about [Method Acting](#), a technique popularized by Lee Strasberg.
- Learn about the [Stanislavski System](#). Also read Constantin Stanislavski's [An Actor Prepares](#).
- Read about [Richard Burbage](#), an actor in Shakespeare's company.
- Learn about [Ruth Draper](#), who David calls an unknown genius of the American theater.

ASSIGNMENT

- In a perfect world, who would you cast in your play or film? Share your ideal choices with your classmates in [The Hub](#). What qualities of your chosen actors make them great fits for your characters? Explain the reasoning behind your decisions and suggest actors for your classmates' plays and films. Also share your favorite film and stage performances, as well as the actors who, in your eyes, are prophets.

$22+23.$

NOTES

24+25.

LIFE OF A DRAMATIST

"You know the best thing you can say to someone who wants to go into show business? You know what it is? 'Don't do it.' You know why? Because if they listen, they don't belong in show business."

—David Mamet

SUBCHAPTERS

- Work at the Chop Shops
- When It's Terrible, It's not so Bad
- Learn How to Stand the Uncertainty
- Dedication Leads You Beyond Consciousness
- If You Want to Do This, You'll Figure It Out
- The Responsibility Is a Privilege
- Self-Doubt
- What's Stopping You?
- Avoid Inaction

CHAPTER REVIEW

For David, writing offers a way to quiet his consciousness by giving it a problem with which it can grapple. He sees theater as a cooperative effort, a group of people getting together to volunteer their talents and their space. David contends you won't find this readiness to participate and combine efforts in any school, but you'll find it in a theater fiend's garage.

David refers to chop shops, where kids would assemble hot rod buggies out of parts of various stolen cars. The Detroit automakers were beating a path to their door, wanting to emulate their creations. The same situation can be applied to theater: put on your own play in the garage, and maybe the world will beat a path to your door. If it doesn't, keep going anyway.

As a writer, you must inhabit several people at once — your characters, yourself, and your audience. You're in show business because you love it, because you have an uncontrollable need to be a part of it. As David says, if you have something to fall back on, the circus doesn't want you.

Most people drop out of show business because they can't stand the uncertainty. By entering the field, you commit yourself to a life of self-direction. No one's going to be your mentor in show business, though a lot of people will offer themselves as one.

You're guaranteed to get everything wrong, and you'll just have to figure it out for yourself. Dedicate yourself to the discipline of your craft, and eventually you will be rewarded. Remember, you don't have to be a writer. You might not be cut out for it, and you're certain to find out. If you decide being a writer is for you, stay in that chair until you work it out.

You can't afford inaction. You can't wait for the phone to ring. Make sure you're writing all the time, and take the advice David gives his children who are also writers: do one thing for your art and one thing for your business every day. Remember that a good life is not about being dealt a good hand, but playing a bad hand well. There will be self-doubt throughout your career as a dramatist, but the privilege and joy that come with the job will outweigh the negative.

24+25.

LIFE OF A DRAMATIST

TAKE IT FURTHER

- David has written many terrific books of essays about his life as a writer (e.g., *Writing in Restaurants*, *Some Freaks*, *Jafsie and John Henry*, *The Village*, etc.) that you might want to peruse and enjoy. You could also read some books that other writers have penned about their chosen profession and how it is that they are able to do what they do. Some of these books we recommend include Stephen King's *On Writing*, William Goldman's *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, Annie Dillard's *The Writing Life*, Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, and Sarah Ruhl's *100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write*.

ASSIGNMENT

- Start planning your two actions for each day. One should be for your art and one should be for your business. For the latter, David suggests writing an email, making a phone call or a new connection, or getting cards printed up. For your art, take a class or read a play. Create a schedule of your two daily actions for the next month and stick to it!

$24+25.$

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

CLOSING

'I wish' is a proclamation of something you're not going to do. So rather than 'I wish,' if there's something you want, say 'I will' or 'I intend to' or 'I'm going to' and do it. What's the worst thing that's gonna happen to you? You're gonna fail? So what?"

—David Mamet

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've finished your MasterClass with David! We hope you feel inspired to achieve your goals as a playwright, screenwriter, or dramatist. Remember, artists are the stone the builders' reject. Never stop writing. The real world's waiting for you. Good luck!

We want to make sure that your experience with David and your peers doesn't end when you finish watching the video chapters. Here are a few ways to stay in touch:

MASTERCLASS ONLINE COMMUNITY

- Stay active in [The Hub](#) by posting questions and assignments, and be sure to provide feedback to your classmates!
- Contribute to lesson discussions, and upload your relevant assignments to 'Rate and Review' for peer feedback.

OFFICE HOURS

- Submit your questions on the Office Hours page of the MasterClass site. Keep your eyes peeled for David's personal responses.

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MASTERCLASS

DAVID MAMET TEACHES DRAMATIC WRITING